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PREFACE

ABOUT the middle of the XIXth century the shadow of Russia in Central Asia began to fall across the vision of a Britain which had just succeeded to the Sikhs in the Panjab and was occupied in the consolidation of territories which became known as the North-West Frontier. From that date the external policy of the British government in India was directed mainly to the stabilization of Middle Eastern frontiers and to safeguarding the continued existence of Persia and Afghanistan against the forces of Russian expansion. As a result of that policy the Russian advance was halted, where it still stands, on the Oxus and along the fringe of the Turkmen mountains.

In due course the Soviets succeeded the Tsars in the Turkish lands of Central Asia, and Britain withdrew her forces from a partitioned Indian continent. In Southern and South-Western Asia the bonds of the Commonwealth are now loosened. In Central Asia Soviet Russia remains in control of many million Muslims of Turco-Iranian stock. These territories, once known as Turkistan, are in fact an overlap between the Islamic and the Soviet world. It is the purpose of this book at a moment of solvency brought on by Stalin's death to weigh old influences with new, and estimate the part which these peoples are destined to play in the struggle between the Communist world and the West.

For concentrated historical or contemporary thought on Russian Central Asia in English it is necessary to go back at least fifty years. It is extremely hard today to uncover modern sources of real value in a field of peculiar importance and little known outside Soviet Russia. The gap has to be filled mainly from Russia and Turkey. In respect of one period in particular — the uneasy interregnum between the October Revolution and the consolidation of Soviet power — I have

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127 The primary sources of information for this essay consisted of the standard literature on Central Asia, pre-Revolutionary and Soviet, and of 124 materials collected in the course of interviews conducted with 31 Muslim refugees from the Soviet Union, most of them from Central Asia.[2] These interviews concentrated on the personal experiences of the informants, and avoided, insofar as possible, references to politics, in order to reduce to a minimum the likelihood of deliberate concealment or lying. All the informants were male, and consisted, in their majority, of persons 30 to 50 years of age, with a high school or *tekhnikum* education, who had left the Soviet Union as laborers or prisoners of war in the course of the Nazi-Soviet conflict. They represented, in other words, largely the middle-aged Soviet "intelligentsia" (in the Communist sense of the word). The conclusions derived from the interviews were placed against the historical background of Central Asia for the purpose of separating the accidental from the essential, on the assumption that generalizations obtained from interviews were both more reliable and more significant in terms of the future when in agreement with pre-Soviet developments in Central Asia. The fact that in the main there is such agreement seems to the author an added reason for confidence in the correctness of the conclusions thus derived.

• 121 The main criteria used in investigating the cultural tendencies of Central Asian Muslim were five: religion, customs, language, ethnic identity, and the character and trends of the native intelligentsia. An attempt was made in each case to determine the extent and nature of the changes which had occurred under Soviet rule; to ascertain whether these changes agreed with or ran contrary to the spontaneous developments taking place prior to the 1917 Revolution; and finally, to evaluate their meaning in terms of the probable future.

RELIGION

000 The term "religion" comprises at least three distinct phenomena: a belief in the existence of one or more supreme beings; a set of rituals which gives this belief external expression; and a way of life based upon the principles explicitly and implicitly enunciated by the belief's founders. In analyzing the religious life of a community, these aspects must be clearly differentiated.

101 Russian Central Asia consists of two main parts, distinguished from each other by historic tradition, culture, and topography: the northern half, the steppe region (today's Kazakhstan), and the southern half, Turkestan (comprising the remaining four Central Asian republics). The

122 [2] These interviews were conducted in the summer of 1953 under the auspices and with the generous assistance of the Institute of Intercultural Studies and the Ford Foundation. I wish to express my particular gratitude to Professor Philip E. Mosely of Columbia University, who first suggested this task and was instrumental in enabling me to carry it out. I also would like to thank the Center for International Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for its kind help in completing this inquiry.

000 Russian Empire. Our entire aim should be to prepare the population for the acceptance of Russian principles and Russian civilization - for the assimilation, as rapid and as rational as possible, of the provinces which have been newly annexed. The Kazakh steppes, it is true, have long been considered part of the Empire, but their incorporation has been only nominal until this time. The proof that the government has regarded the Kazakhs only as a foreign people can be seen most clearly in the fact that until 1868 the Kazakh steppes were divided from the Empire by the Orenburg/Chkalov/ - Siberian customs line.

What measures must be taken in order to blend the native population of Turkestan with the Russian is a complex and broad question, and cannot be the object of our investigation. Here we will indicate only in general lines characteristics of the organization of life and the character of the natives of the Turkestan region. These can contribute in their turn to finding the necessary ways of inculcating the principles of Russian civilization among the natives.

121 In the preceding chapter we saw that numerically, the chief people of the Turkestan area are the nomads; that is, the Kazakhs, and the Kirgiz, who are related to them. After them come the Sarts, who before the coming of the Russians, held the rule of the natives in their hands. The remaining peoples are relatively few in number. For this reason in surveying the public and domestic way of life of the natives/338/ it is enough to describe the Kazakhs, representatives of a nomadic way of life, and the Sarts, representatives of the sedentary natives of the area.